



The Eagle



The Monthly Newsletter of the Federal Community

The Federal Executive Board of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota

<http://www.doi.gov/febtc/>

October 1997

Volume III Number X

FEB Awards Program a Big Success



New Horizons Hammer

Four Hammer Awards were presented at the September full board luncheon/FEB Awards program. The Customer Service Team at the Veterans Administration Regional Office and Insurance Center, Small Business Administration, Interagency Training Council of the Federal Executive Board and New Horizons Computer Learning Centers of Minneapolis, Minnesota were honored in the ceremony. A previously awarded Hammer Award presented to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service was also recognized at the event. These will not be the only Hammers awarded to Twin Cities Federal entities this calendar year as we received a late note that the Federal Executive Board Communications Program Council will receive a Hammer for the Minneapolis Blue Pages project sometime this winter.

The recent Federal Employees Education Association scholarship recipients were honored during the celebration as well as members of the FEB Policy Board and special people who helped FEB chair Sharon Ellett during the past year. The gavel was passed to the new FEB Chairman, Edward Daum, Regional Manager, Small Business Administration in Minneapolis.



Dr. "Mac" McClure

A riveting program was delivered by Dr. H.C. "Mac" McClure (Retired FAA), Federal Executive Board Chair in Oklahoma City in 1995. Dr. McClure talked frankly about the lessons learned from the bombing of the Murrah Federal Office Building during his term as FEB chairman. Dr. McClure also gave a strong message to all the Federal employees gathered there on the importance of public service work. The FEB videotaped Dr. McClure's remarks, thanks to

David Reedstrom (VA RO&I). If any agency is interested in showing this tape, please call the FEB office at 725-3687.

WHAT IS SEPM TRAINING?

The Federal Executive Board (FEB) Diversity Council is sponsoring the annual Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) Training Seminar at the VA Employee Education System, Minneapolis Center, on October 29, 1997.

This program is designed to provide information and guidelines to assist Special Emphasis Program Managers, who have responsibility with the Federal Women's Program, American Indian Program, Disability Advisory Council, Asian Pacific Islander, African American Affairs Program and/or, Hispanic Employment Program. The speakers have tailored the training to meet the needs and concerns of the new and experienced agency SEP managers. Do you know of someone in this role of SEP? Do they know their responsibilities? Do they have a network to give them various levels of support for their program responsibilities?

To register, please contact Brenda Alford at (612) 370-2108, Deb Conrad at (612) 290-3456, or David Reedstrom at (612) 725-3101 for registration materials.

The cost for this 1-day training session is \$30.00, which includes lunch and a reference SEPM book.

What's In This Issue

PAGE 1

- FEB Awards Program A Big Success
- What is SEPM Training?

PAGE 2

- Just What Is The FEB? (Part 3)
- The Electronic Eagle

PAGE 3

- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Volunteers Needed for MLK Day

PAGE 4

- **Focus On:** The Internal Revenue Service

PAGE 5

- 1998 Federal Employees Health Benefits Program Open Season Highlights

PAGE 6

- Presidential Initiatives Page
- Satellite Broadcast Schedule
- Combined Federal Campaign

Page 6 - Interagency Training Page

- FEB Training Calendar
- Upcoming Workshops
- 1997 Combined Federal Campaign notes

**For General
Distribution To All Federal
Employees In Your Office**



Just What Is The Federal Executive Board? - Part 3

This is the third monthly installment of a continuing series on "*Just What Is The Federal Executive Board.*" This month's issue focuses on the first two of the eight different program areas that the Twin Cities FEB oversees or is an active participant.

Community Support Programs

Activities by the community support program council directly benefits the health and well being of our local community within Minneapolis and St. Paul. In addition to the Combined Federal Campaign (below) other programs like the Paint-A-Thon, Santa Anonymous and American Red Cross and VA Blood drives were sponsored by a lead agency through the Community Support Councils of the FEB.

Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)

The CFC is the annual charity drive within the Federal Community. Combined Federal Campaign funds help a wide array of local as well as national or international organizations. Contributions by Twin Cities Federal workers continue to show a strong commitment to help others. The CFC is underway, the campaign will end November 3, 1997.

Diversity Programs

The diversity programs council benefit all Federal employees within the Twin Cities commuting area. There is a wide variety of program areas that assist employees or clients within the community within the scope of the councils focus through special events in the community.

American Indian Program: promotes understanding of American Indian issues and concerns through training and outreach within the community. This committee also plans for observances of Native American Indian Month and for the last several years has provided major training on cultural awareness for the Federal community.



The Electronic Eagle

Do you want to save fax paper? Do you have Email that can receive messages via the Internet? If so, then you could receive **The Electronic Eagle**. This Eagle has everything you get here and it is in *Full Color*. You can also forward it to your staff to keep them informed of the different activities within the Federal community. It could also be printed for distribution, in color if you have the right equipment.

Now for the technical stuff! You need to have Adobe Acrobat reader on each computer where you send it. The good news is that the Acrobat reader is absolutely free and can be downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.adobe/acrobat>.

Need more information, call us at (612) 725-3687. The Electronic Eagle is also posted monthly on our FEB Internet Site, <http://www.doi.gov/febtc/>.



Asian/Pacific Islander Program: promotes awareness throughout the Federal community of the cultures of Asian and Pacific Islander Peoples in the Twin Cities area. This committee has compiled an outstanding resource handbook of organizations relating to the Asian/Pacific Islander community. This guide will soon be added to the FEB Web site.

African American Affairs Council: coordinates programs and activities which promote the employment and career advancement of African-Americans.

Disability Advisory Committee: works on employment issues relating to disabled Federal employees and potential employees.

Hispanic Employment Program: works with Federal agencies and community organizations to promote hiring of Hispanic employees; does extensive outreach in the community about Federal service and Federal programs.

Federal Women's Program: coordinates programs and activities which promote the employment, training and advancement of women in Federal service. FWP annually presents a day long training session for Federal employees which attracts up to 600 attendees.



Presidential Initiatives

Hispanic Heritage Month

National Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15 through October 15. The Office of Personnel Management asked all agency heads and managers in the Federal Government pause to recognize that much needs to be done to assure equality in Federal employment for all citizens of the United States regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is implementing a 9-point plan to improve the representation of Hispanics in the Federal workforce. This policy change follows the President's desire to have a Government that looks like America. The nine point initiative includes: 1). Support and implement the White House initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans; 2). Provide employment information to students, faculty and the Hispanic community; 3). Use the Presidential Management Intern (PMI) Program for recruiting, converting, and advancing Hispanic college graduates; 4). Participate in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) National Internship Program; 5). Use the flexibilities of the Student Employment Program to bring Hispanic students into agency's shortage category occupations, as well as other occupations; 6). Develop mentoring programs to motivate young people to pursue higher education Federal careers; 7). Promote participation of Hispanic employees in career development programs; 8). Assess agency needs for full-time, part-time, or collateral Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) Managers and assure that HEP Managers are integral members of the agency's management team; 9). Incorporate these activities into your agency's Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) accomplishment report to OPM.

Volunteers Needed For Upcoming Martin Luther King Holiday Celebration

The African American Affairs Council is soliciting volunteers from all Federal agencies in the Twin Cities to form an interagency committee to plan a celebration for the Martin Luther King holiday in January.

They are asking for one representative (a volunteer and an alternate) from each agency to participate in the committee. The Council is aware that agencies are short of staff and funds. By combining efforts this would be a great opportunity for all Federal agencies in the Twin Cities to get together for this celebration.

Please contact: Lovie Diaz 290-0304, extension 3040 and leave your name, phone number and agency if you are interested.

Important Dates In October

October 13 - Columbus Day
Federal Holiday

October 31 - Happy Halloween
BOO!

Public Service Excellent Awards Nominations Requested

The nomination forms for the 1998 Public Service Excellence Awards are available on the World Wide Web of the Internet. The URL is <http://www.patriot.net/users/permail/98psea.htm>.

Don't have Internet access yet, just call the FEB office to have a form faxed to you (612) 725-3687



Focus On:

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service



IRS District Welcomes New Director

The new fiscal year opened with the installation of a new IRS director. On October 1, Thomas E. Palmer was sworn in as the new director of the North Central District of the Internal Revenue Service. The St. Paul-based district covers North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota.

Palmer, 53, took the oath of office from Midstates Regional Commissioner Gary Booth in a ceremony at the Federal Courts Building in downtown St. Paul. He succeeds Harry L. Fields who passed away in February.

"I am honored to have been selected the Director for the North Central District," Palmer told some 200 employees and guests. "We are a family with strong ties that bind us together." He added, "We must recognize our responsibilities to taxpayers to administer the tax laws in a fair and efficient manner, and earn the trust they have placed in us. We work for the American people."

A 30-year veteran of the tax agency, Palmer began his IRS career in Seattle as a revenue officer collecting overdue taxes from individual and business taxpayers. He rose through the agency's Collection Division ranks, holding positions in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Detroit. He later served as Collection chief in the Omaha and Seattle districts and assistant district director in the San Francisco and Austin districts. Most recently, Palmer was assistant district director in the Southern California District.

A native of Puyallup, Washington, Palmer holds a bachelor's degree in social psychology from Washington State University.

With an annual budget of around \$54 million, the North Central District is responsible for collecting almost \$45 billion a year from individuals and businesses in the three-state area: \$2.13 billion in North Dakota, \$2.57 billion in South Dakota, and \$40.24 billion in Minnesota.



New IRS Regional Director
Tom Palmer



Would you like to have your Agency profiled in the next Focus section? Our next deadline for the Eagle is October 27.

Please submit your materials including photographs and graphics to the FEB Office. Preferably on diskette in either WordPerfect or Microsoft Word format or Email articles to our FEB_Twin_Cities@ios.doi.gov

Please Distribute To All Employees, for more copies call (612) 725-3687



OPM NEWS RELEASE

1998 FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM OPEN SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

Washington, D.C.—Federal health plan enrollees will continue to pay lower average rates than the private sector as they have since 1995, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management said today in announcing that premiums for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program will increase by an average of 8.5 percent for 1998.

“This is the first significant increase in federal health insurance premiums in five years, and in two of those years the average premium actually decreased,” said the new OPM Director Janice R. Lachance. “We expect that the 1998 increase will be significantly lower than the average private sector increase as it has been through most of the 1990s.”

As widely predicted by health insurance experts, the trend toward higher health care costs continues. Industry trends indicate a double digit private sector increase next year compared to the federal hike of less than 9 percent.

For 1998 the FEHB Program will have a number of new benefits. All plans will provide at least 48 hours of inpatient care for normal childbirth and 96 hours of inpatient care for caesarean deliveries. Mastectomy patients must have the option of inpatient care and must be permitted to stay at least 48 hours.

As stipulated in the Mental Health Parity Act, OPM also eliminated maximum dollar limits on covered mental health care. OPM sought to bring about more improvements in mental health benefits, but because all plans were faced with premium increases to cover higher health care costs, success was limited.

“As we look toward the next century, our goal is to make sure federal employees can choose among health plans that provide high quality care and service, including improved mental health coverage, at competitive prices,” said Janice Lachance. “We will continue to work hard to achieve that goal.”

The managed care component of the FEHB Program continues to grow in both size and strength. The 1998 program will contain additional point-of-service products. These products allow enrollees to minimize their out-of-pocket costs by using selected panels of providers. Enrollees also retain the freedom to choose other providers, but at additional cost. These point-of-service products have proven successful in reducing the rate of premium increases by facilitating the transition to managed care.

Because the current formula for dividing premium increases between the government and employees is based on a simple average premium of specified health plans, federal employees and annuitants will, on average, see a biweekly increase of about \$3.32 for self coverage, from \$24.42 to \$27.74 and about \$8.64 for family coverage, from \$54.15 to \$62.79. The maximum biweekly government contributions in 1998 will be \$65.96 for self coverage and \$142.27 for family.

For 1999, the share of premiums paid by employees and the government will be calculated under a new formula. The so-called “Phantom” Formula gives way to a Fair Share formula recently enacted by the Congress. The Fair Share formula will divide premium costs based on a weighted average of the premiums of all plans in the program.

Federal employees may select new health plans during the annual

Open Season which runs from November 10 through December 8. Worldwide, federal employees and retirees will have over 350 plans from which to choose, including some plans that are new to the program.

“We encourage all FEHB enrollees to carefully review the 1998 premium and benefit changes to assure that they continue to receive the maximum value for the dollars they invest in their health care,” Lachance added.



**Federal Employees
Health Benefits Program**

Eagle is published by the Federal Executive Board staff. We encourage any comments, suggestions or articles. Please submit information by FAX or Email: FEB_Twin_Cities@ios.doi.gov
We prefer E-mailed material.

The next deadline is October 27

Editor/designer: Ray Morris, Executive Dir.
Co-Editor: Margaret Geisler, Admin. Ass't.



The FEB Interagency Training Home Page

Please Forward This Segment To Your Local Agency
Training Officer/Office and All Employees



Upcoming Training Schedule Of The FEB Interagency Training Council

September 15, 1997	Pre-Retirement Seminar
September 16, 1997	Pre-Retirement Seminar
October 9, 1997	Creative Problem-Solving
October 21, 1997	Mid-Career Financial Planning Seminar
November 4, 1997	Basic Team Building
November 6, 1997	Finding The Value For Customers
November 13, 1997	Cultivating Your Benefits Seminar
*December 16, 1997	*Pre-Retirement Seminar
January 13, 1998	Mid-Career Financial Planning Seminar
January 27-28, 1998	Basic Quality Tools & Application
February 10, 1998	Cultivating Your Benefits Seminar
February 12, 1998	Coaching and Facilitating
March 10, 1998	Business Planning for Mgrs/Supv/Units
March 10, 1998	Pre-Retirement Seminar
March 12, 1998	Measurement and Surveys
April 28, 1998	Time Management
April 28, 1998	Mid-Career Financial Planning Seminar
May 12, 1998	Cultivating Your Benefits Seminar
June 2, 1998	Benchmarking and Competitive Compar
June 16, 1998	Pre-Retirement Seminar
June 16-18, 1998	Basic Facilitation
July, 1998	no seminars scheduled
August 18-20, 1998	Advanced Facilitation
September 15, 1998	Pre-Retirement Seminar
September 22, 1998	Creative Problem-Solving
November 5, 1998	Finding the Value for Customers

All of the above seminars require preregistration. Registration materials are sent to each agency head 30-45 prior the seminar date. All of the above seminars will be held in Room 570, BHW Fort Snelling.

*-Seminar will be held at the VA Medical Center Auditorium

Upcoming Workshops

Tuesday, October 28, 1997

Federal Woman's Program Annual Training
Minneapolis Education Center (Formerly the REMC) 5445 Minnehaha Ave., South

Wednesday, October 29, 1997

**Second Annual Special Emphasis Program
Manager's Training Event**

8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M..

Minneapolis Education Center (Formerly called the REMC) 5445 Minnehaha Avenue South
SEPM: "THE BUSINESS CASE"

Last year's training event was a great success and this year's should be fantastic!!!

November 19, 1997

**Fifth Annual American Indian Awareness
Conference**

7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M..

held at the Minneapolis Education Center of VA (REMC). Registration is \$25 and seating is limited to 70 people. Preregistration is required for this conference. More information call Margie Maldonado, USFWS at (612) 725-3924.



**Recycle this issue by sharing it
with all of your staff**



1997 Combined Federal Campaign

Exercise Your Right To Care! Twin Cities Campaign September 22 to November 3
An Annual Gift of

\$45 (cost of one pop per week)
Provides corn seed for 18 families

An Annual Gift of
\$100 (cost of one bagel & coffee per week)
Provides 60 days of transportation for
kidney dialysis